1: Jochelson E-5 (1900-01) 1908 RY4 Koryak RY4

VI. — BIRTH, DEATH, AND FUNERALS.

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BIRTH. — Before a child is born, the Supreme Being sends into the mother's womb the soul (uyi'čit) of some deceased relative of the child to be born. The length of life of each soul is determined beforehand. Souls are hanging on the cross-beams of the house of The-One-on-High. The duration of the earthly life of the future possessor of the soul is marked by the strap which is attached to the soul's neck or thumb. The shorter the strap, the shorter will be the life of the new-born. A drawing made by the Koryak Yulta, already described (see Fig. 40, p. 93), illustrates the Koryak idea of souls hanging in the house of the Supreme Being.

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As soon as a child is born, it is given the name of the dead relative whose soul has been reborn in it. The father of the new-born uses a divining-stone called Little-Grandmother (An·a'pel) to discover whose soul has entered the child. The divining-stone is hung by a string to a stick, the latter is lifted, and the stone begins to swing; or it is hung from a tripod made of small sticks. The father of the child enumerates the names of the deceased relatives on his and his wife's side. When the name of the relative whose soul has entered the child is mentioned, the divining-stone begins to swing quicker. Another way of determining the identity of the soul is by observation of the behavior of the child itself. A number of names are mentioned. If the child cries while a name is pronounced, it shows that it is not the name of the soul reborn in the child. When the proper name is pronounced, the child stops crying, or begins to smile. After the name has been given, the father takes the child in his arms, carries it out from the sleeping-tent into the house, and says to his people, "A relative has come" (Qaitu'mñin ye'ti). On one occasion during our stay in the village of Kamenskoye, a child was named after the deceased father-in-law of Yulta's son. The latter lifted the child, and said to the mother, "Here, thy father has come!"

If a mistake is made in divining the identity of the soul which entered the new-born child, something will ail the child after it has been named. Then this mistake may be corrected, and its name is usually changed by means of repeated divination.

Neither I myself nor my wife was present at a confinement, nor did we witness the divining while the child was named.[1] What I am going to describe here is recorded from what the Koryak have told me.

[1] In every village, I made inquiries about pregnant women, asking them to call my wife when the confinement should take place, that she might become acquainted with the Koryak methods of midwifery; but the Koryak concealed all births from us. On two occasions women were confined in the villages where we were staying, but we learned of it only *post factum*.

17:Antropova E-4 (no date) 1964 RY4 Koryak RY4

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Images of ancestor spirits:
1—having "descendants"; 2—one without living "descendants."

To placate the nin'vits, the Koryaks

sacrificed to them. Thus, a hunter passing by a place considered to be inhabited by a nin'vit' had to make a sacrifice of a pinch of tobacco or several cartridges. The places inhabited by nin'vit's were very numerous; they were cliffs of unusual formation, hot springs or waterfalls, places where a corpse had been burned or a hunter perished, the ruins of a dwelling, abandoned after the death of one of its inhabitants, and so forth. Koryak ideas about the dead were ambivalent. They held that after death a person became a nin'vit', that is, a harmful, hostile being. At the same time, there was the notion of ancestors who lived somewhere underground or in the sky and helped their descendants, sending them success in the hunt, protecting their herds, etc. Ancestor images were made of wood. They were small, crudely carved wooden figures (kalak), representing a sitting or, more rarely, a standing person, with a flat face, without a nose, with two hollows in the place of eyes and a rather large hollow to indicate the mouth. During family celebrations the mouth-hole was filled with fat or fat meat. Every family had whole bundles of kalaks; every Koryak had his own kalak—his personal guardian.

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The Koryaks believed that the shaman had power over nin'vit's. The shaman communicated with nin'vit's in total darkness; the entrance to the dwelling was carefully closed, the smoke vent was stopped up with a bundle of grass, the hearth fire was put out. The shaman struck his tambourine, cried out fragmentary words and phrases, danced and sang.

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The shaman's actions were usually stimulated by intoxication from the fly-agaric eaten beforehand. When he tired, the shaman fell asleep. The Koryaks believed that the "prophetic fly-agaric" led him into the next world and arranged meetings with dead kinsmen, from whom the shaman obtained the necessary instructions. On awakening from his long sleep, the shaman related his visions to the people around him.

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The Koryak shaman did not have any special dress. He performed his rituals in the usual clothing, which differed from the rest only in the large number of tags and disks of skin or beads attached to it. Some shamans made slight changes in their dress during the ritual performance, such as wearing a man's boot on one foot, and a woman's on the other. The tambourine was narrow-rimmed.

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In addition to professional shamanism, the Koryaks also practiced family shamanism, predominantly in the hands of women. This was closely bound to the cult of the family hearth. Every member born in a family was regarded as a reincarnation of an ancestor. The exact identity of the ancestor was learned with the aid of divination. For this purpose, a stone in a leather pouch was suspended from a small tripod. The eldest member of the family

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17:Antropova E-4 (no date) 1964 RY4 Koryak RY4

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Preparations for burning a corpse.

756 pronounced in succession the names of the dead ancestors until the stone
787 shook at the sound of the name. Then the family felt that the name had been
• 553 guessed, and it was given to the newborn.

The reindeer-breeding and the sedentary Koryaks held various seasonal celebrations. The main holiday of the reindeer-breeders was the spring kil'vey—the festival of horns. It was celebrated after the calving, when the herd was brought to the encampment. The people brought out of their dwellings bowls with pieces of meat and the sacred wooden fire-making device which they proceeded to "feed." In autumn, they celebrated the festival of the autumn deer slaughter. This festival was also attended by shamanistic performances, sacrifices, and the "feeding" of the wooden fire-maker. The coastal hunters celebrated the festival of floating the baydar in the spring, at the beginning of the spring hunting season. At this time they sacrificed dogs. After the celebration, they opened the summer entrance to the semi-dugout. After the closing of the autumn sea hunting season (in November) the coastal Koryaks held the "seal festival" (in olden times it was the "whale festival"). The participants in the celebration pleaded with the animals killed during the hunt to return to the sea and let themselves be caught again next year, and also to bring along their relatives with them. The dead animals were replaced by zoomorphic representations made of seaweed.

773 The creator of men and the universe, according to Koryak beliefs, was An'an' or Etyny. However, when man was being created, the harmful being, Nen'vetgyyn'yn, intervened. It took out the hard hearts of the first men and substituted clay hearts; this led to all the weaknesses, diseases and misfortunes among men.

825 The Koryaks regarded wolves as their relatives (some sources also name
[784 the bear). The wolf was described as a shaman animal. Even in the 20th century, many Alyutortsy strictly observed the taboo on killing wolves, which, of course, had an extremely adverse effect on their reindeer-breeding.
764 The Koryaks burned the bodies of their dead.

Folk Arts

773 The Koryaks had a cycle of myths closely akin to those of the Chukchi and Itel'mens, and similar to the Eskimos'. The principal character of these myths is the raven-creator (in Koryak, Kuykynnyaku or Kutkynnyaku) which, according to the beliefs of these peoples, gave people all their material goods: he gave men reindeer and dogs, and taught them reindeer-breeding, fishing, sea hunting, and the use of dog transportation. In some of the myths, the image of the raven is fused with the image of the Etyny. But most

23: Krasheninnikov .N-3 (1736-40) 1764 Koryak

that are rich, as ſoon as the child is born, ſet apart for him a certain number of rein-deer, which however he cannot claim 'till he comes to maturity. The old women give names to the children, with the following ceremonies:---They ſet up two little rods, which they tie together with threads, to the middle of which they hang a ſtone wrapped in a piece of ſheep-ſkin; then they aſk of the ſtone in a muttering voice the name they ſhall give, and running over thoſe of ſeveral of their relations, whatever name the ſtone ſhakes at they give to the child. The child-bed woman does not ſhew herſelf nor come out of the hut for ten days; if they are obliged to remove their habitations during that time, ſhe is carried in a covered ſledge. They give their children the breaſt 'till they are three years old and upwards; but they uſe neither cradle nor ſwaddling cloaths.

They carefully attend thoſe who are ſick, and their *Shamans*, or conjurers, treat them in the manner above related; but they know nothing of the virtues of drugs or plants.

They burn their dead in the following manner:---Having firſt dreſſed them in their fineſt apparel, they draw them with thoſe deer which they think were their favourites to the place where they are to be burned. Here they erect a great pile of wood, into which are thrown the arms of the deceaſed and ſome houſhold furniture, ſuch as their ſpear, quiver and arrows, knives, hatchets, kettles, &c. Then they ſet fire to the pile; and while it is burning, kill the deer that drew the corps, upon which they feaſt, and throw the fragments into the fire.

They celebrate the memory of the dead only once, and that a year after their death. All the relations then aſſemble; and taking two young rein-deers that have never been in the draught, and a great many deers' horns, which they have been collecting through the whole year for that purpoſe, they go to the place where the body was burned, if near, or if at a diſtance, to ſome other high place, where they kill the deer;